SALINAS RIVER LAGOON/OLD SALINAS RIVER FLOODPLAIN RESILIENCY AND CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

SUMMARY

This project is strengthening local management of the Salinas River Lagoon and the Old Salinas River channel, in Monterey County, as both a flood-control system and an estuarine ecosystem. Efforts are underway to overcome constraints caused by outdated water-control infrastructure and an undersized, degraded channel that currently limit flood resilience and ecosystem recovery. Coastal Conservation and Research (CC&R), in partnership with the Central Coast Wetlands Group (CCWG), the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA), California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (CMSF), local landowners, and state and federal agencies, is working to increase climate resilience, enhance hydrologic connectivity, reduce flood risk to coastal farmland and disadvantaged communities, and improve estuarine habitat quality.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project is advancing core objectives in an integrated way. First, it is designing and constructing an upgraded water-control structure to improve flood attenuation and provide greater flexibility for water-level management under shifting rainfall and tidal patterns. The redesigned structure will create controlled connectivity between the Old Salinas River and the Salinas River Lagoon, enabling more effective storm-discharge management during extreme tide events. Second, the project is reducing flood risk and enhancing habitat by restoring floodplain areas along the Old Salinas River and Tembladero Slough. This work includes securing land access agreements and restoring at least 30 acres of floodplain to increase hydraulic capacity, lower inundation levels, and improve water quality. Third, the team is coordinating restoration design with Monterey County's upgrades to aging hydrologic infrastructure to ensure that flood-reduction, ecological restoration, and long-term climate-resilience outcomes are achieved together at a system scale rather than through isolated interventions.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The team is currently carrying out design, permitting, partnership coordination, and implementation activities. Engineers and restoration planners are developing improvements to a water-control structure that has limited operational flexibility under current climate and tidal conditions.

ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Flood Risk Reduction

PARTNERS

Coastal Conservation and Research

Central Coast Wetlands Group

Monterey County Water Resources Agency

This work is part of Climate Resilient Monterey Bay (CRMB), an initiative through the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation. CRMB is Federally funded as part of the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge through the Inflation Reduction Act and administered by the Office for Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Last Updated: 12/9/2025

SALINAS RIVER LAGOON/OLD SALINAS RIVER FLOODPLAIN RESILIENCY AND CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

In parallel, the project is obtaining landowner access agreements and designing floodplain restoration work on unproductive agricultural lands work which includes grading to increase channel capacity, re-establishing vegetated buffers, and installing small treatment wetlands.

ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Flood Risk Reduction

PARTNERS

Coastal Conservation & Research, Inc.

Coastal Conservation and Research

CCWG Central Coast Wetlands Group

Central Coast Wetlands Group

Monterey County Water Resources Agency 1947

Monterey County Water Resources Agency

CMSF

This work is part of Climate Resilient Monterey Bay (CRMB), an initiative through the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation. CRMB is Federally funded as part of the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge through the Inflation Reduction Act and administered by the Office for Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

NOAA

Last Updated: 12/9/2025